DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 090 148 SP 007 871

AUTHOR Howey, Kenneth R.
TITLE Teacher Centers--Is There Anything New? Some Tentative Guidelines for Assessing the Nature and Extent of Collaboration and Renewal.
PUB DATE Apr 74
NOTE 8p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (Chicago, Illinois, April 1974)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.75 HC-$1.50 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS Educational Assessment; *Evaluation; Evaluation Criteria; Guidelines; Motivation; *Program Evaluation; *Teacher Centers

ABSTRACT

Guidelines for reviewing teacher centers are presented in this paper. A teacher center is defined as an operation which incorporates the following: a) formal shared decision-making with regard to policy formation, budget, personnel and program by those who are affected, whether they are teachers, students, teacher educators, or community members; b) visible incentives for persons from colleges, schools and the community to be involved in the center; c) multiple strategies for effecting parity trade-off between colleges, schools, and community; d) multiple strategies for releasing teachers from some of their on-going daily responsibilities to participate in the center; and e) a primary focus on the improvement of instruction rather than the improvement of teachers. The guidelines for reviewing teacher centers are stated as questions with regard to a) governance structures, b) structures for continuing participation by schools, colleges, and the community; c) thrust of the program; and d) nature and extent of the resources of the center. (HMD)

ED 090148

Sol.

Teacher Centers -- Is There Anything New?
Some Tentative Guidelines
For Assessing the Nature and
Extent of Collaboration and Renewal

A Paper Prepared for the 1974
AERA Convention April 15-19
Chicago, Illinois

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

Kenneth R. Howey
University of Minnesota

SP 007 871

A number of diverse phenomena and pressure points have contributed to a renewed and expanded interest in and in many cases the development of teacher centers. Growing movements such as competency-based education, product accountability, alternative systems of schooling as well as such obvious trends as fiscal austerity, increased teacher politicization and community demands for new governance structures all seem to indicate that the center concept is really just beginning to pick up steam.

The term teacher center obviously assumes multiple meaning. There are a number of legal-political structures referred to as teacher centers and there is probably even a greater range of priority functions assumed by these operations. No attempt will be made here to characterize these different types of centers nor to compare them in any way. Rather an advocacy position is taken here that many of these centers should address themselves to two very complex and interrelated phenomena. The first challenge is to engage in a more genuine and continuing collaboration between community, schools and colleges and the second is to approach teacher renewal in the larger context of change that is needed in the schooling process.

Certainly teachers should be a central focus of teacher centers. The position taken here, however, is that the key to effective continuing renewal at any level of schooling by a teacher center is an operation which incorporates the following:

1. Formal shared decision-making channels with respect to policy formulation, budget expenditure and personnel, program and resource allocation by all affected by those decisions whether teachers, teacher educators, students or community.

2. Visible and multiple incentives for persons from colleges, schools, and communities to be involved in the center.

3. Multiple strategies for effecting parity trade-off between colleges, schools, and communities.

4. Multiple strategies for releasing teachers from some of their on-going daily responsibilities to participate in the centers.

5. A primary focus on the improvement of instruction rather than the improvement of teachers.

Comprehensive renewal demands a reexamination of several roles and often the reallocation as well as retraining of personnel in the schooling process. It also often demands a consideration of many new roles and new parties accessing a system. Finally, it demands that the improvement of teachers be considered in the larger context of program and school improvements and how all the interrelated dimensions of time, space, materials and personnel, both teachers and learners, may have to be modified. School programs must more adequately reflect the diverse interest and needs of the community and it is in the context of diverse and alternative school settings that what is really needed by teachers may be more accurately assessed.

Is there anything new in centers? Obviously, yes! Many different innovations in many different centers could be enumerated. Yet the centers which meet or even attempt to meet the five criteria for effective comprehensive renewal suggested above are few. The center which could respond positively to each of the questions in the guidelines which follow probably doesn't exist. From this perspective the state of readiness for collaboration is evolving. The awareness by the certificated teacher that he may in fact be called upon for substantial role modification is probably comparable to the professor's level of awareness that increasingly he may be called upon to be in schools,and to the parent's awareness that schools in fact can vary considerably and that he has something to say about that.

The challenge of renewal is considerable. The following questions or guidelines are a rough first cut. It is hoped that they are helpful in at least two ways. First, for those in center operations they provide some very rigorous

standards to compare with and possibly some new directions to consider. Second, for those considering the development of centers they define some of the dimensions of centers which will have to be addressed for the center to be effective.

A. Governance

1. What formal inside-the-system participatory mechanisms exist for decision-making and participation by:

a) personnel in the cooperating school system(s)
b) representative(s) from the local teacher organization(s)
c) personnel in the cooperating college system(s)
d) representative(s) from the college teacher organization(s)
e) people from the immediate community
f) students from both the colleges and schools
g) representative(s) from the State Department of Public Instruction (where appropriate)

2. What formal decision-making bodies exist in the center?

a) How are monies appropriated? What is the percentage of local support for the center?
b) How are policies determined?
c) How are major goals and priorities set?
d) How are center staff selected?
e) How are monies and resources expended and disseminated?
f) How is summative and formative evaluation handled? Who is able to make continuing program and personnel modifications?

3. What is the breakdown on or percentage of monies and physical and human resources which colleges or schools or others contribute to the support of the center?

4. What is the breakdown of personnel from different elements of the profession and community which are appointed to the center?

a) School personnel
b) College personnel
c) Community personnel
d) Student personnel
e) Others

5. What personnel on the center staff have joint appointments and what type of joint contractual arrangements are there? To what extent are these people in positions of influence?

B. Continuing Participation

1. What kinds of formal communication vehicles exist for keeping the center visible in the school(s), college(s), community?

2. What specific strategies are utilized to free teachers during the instructional day to utilize the center:

a) early dismissal from instructional responsibility
b) paid substitutes
c) flexible teaming with time built in for teachers to leave
d) more extended internships underwritten by the center
e) trade-offs through student graduate or undergraduate and faculty from college which allow school faculty released time
f) center staff or cadre utilized to release teachers
g) to what extent is the center personnel and resources mobile in moving to schools

3. What other types of incentives are there for teachers to participate in the center?

a) access to desired materials and resources not readily available to them in their own setting
b) access to desired personnel resources not usually available to them in their own setting
c) opportunity to engage in social/professional interaction not readily available in their own school
d) access to monies for proposed projects, materials, travel.
e) reasonable access to the center facility in terms of distance and parking if necessary
f) opportunity to acquire credit on professional growth schedules and for continuing certification programs
g) opportunity to acquire college credit for advanced degrees
h) opportunity to design, develop or conduct workshops or desired activities for other school personnel or interested community
i) opportunity to engage in the college decision-making process or become part of the college instructional process through reviewing or developing curriculum or teaching faculty or students

4. What specific incentives are there for college faculty to participate in the center?

a) access to materials and resources not readily available in their own setting
b) access to teachers, students and other desired personnel not otherwise readily available
c) access to social/professional interaction not readily available in their own setting
d) access to monies for proposed projects research, development

e) priority recognition in the college salary and promotion guidelines for involvement in the type of activities promoted by the center
f) easy access to the center facility in terms of travel and parking if necessary

5. What specific incentives are there for community persons to participate in the center?

a) paid stipends for participation on boards, committees, task forces
b) assistance when needed in travel, parking and baby sitting
c) salaried positions available for some community persons in the teacher center
d) access to monies for proposed projects and travel
e) access to desired materials and resources
f) access to desired professional personnel
g) access to possible professional career lattice programs
h) access to means and strategies to determine direction in their own schools

C. Program Thrust

1. To what extent are renewal efforts in the center congruent with and reflective of the diverse needs and interests of the community(s) in which they serve?

2. Do more substantive proposals to the center for monies, services or resources to initiate a renewal effort demand involvement and sign off by all parties affected by that effort e.i. college, community schools, students?

3. To what extent does the center facilitate continuing dialogue generated to critically examine basic community differences in values and assumptions about what they want for their children in the schooling process?

4. To what extent do these basic value agreements and differences provide the center with starting points for comprehensive renewal, i.e. different basic assumptions are examined in terms of their applications for the total school environment. Multi-dimensional renewal is addressed in terms of time, space, materials, instructional personnel and students in an interrelated manner as opposed to only single dimension considerations such as scheduling, teaming, curriculum revision, grouping learners?

5. To what extent are many of the teacher's growth and improvement efforts addressed in terms of larger, more systemic programmatic renewal efforts?

6. To what extent are 'teacher educators' addressing programmatically not only 'better' teachers but also the need for alternative types of teachers and school personnel for alternative schools programs and settings?

7. To what extent are college and community actively collaborating on-site with school personnel and students in individual and programmatic renewal efforts? How does the center facilitate this?

8. To what extent are school and community personnel actively collaborating in both developing programs for and then engaging in a) the admission b) the instruction and c) the placement and continuing support and renewal of the pre-certificated students of teaching? How specifically are school and community utilized in college programs? What specifically does the center do to facilitate this?

D. Nature and Extent of Resources and Resource Generators

1. What plans or mechanisms exist for the center to be able to generate monies?

2. What are the formal means in which the center is able to negotiate trade-offs between different parties within the schooling process and between the educational community and the larger community?

3. To what extent is the center networking with other institutions, agencies and organizations outside the conventional schooling system?

4. What is available in or from the center in terms of self-instructional or collegial teacher training packages and products?

5. What is available in or from the center in terms of practical materials or guidelines for developing one's own practical materials?

6. What is available in or from the center in terms of resources and facilities for micro or peer teaching activities?

7. What is available in or from the center in terms of closed-circuit television either for observation or instructional delivery to campus and schools?

8. What is available in or from the center in terms of professional references or retrieval systems?

9. What is available in or from the center in terms of current curriculum resources and materials?

10. What is available in or from the center in terms of materials development opportunities.

11. What is available in or from the center in terms of audio-visual resources?

12. What exists in the center in terms of facilitating social interaction?

13. What exists in the center to accomodate individual, small or large group learning?

Postscript

Your reactions to and suggestions for the improvement of these broad guidelines for reviewing centers would be most appreciated. We have struggled with many, although certainly not all, of these problems in our Minneapolis Schools/ University of Minnesota Teacher Center. A brief overview of our center operation, some of its priority goals and the setting in which it is located is included here. Certainly no suggestion that we are some beacon of light in the center movement is intended. We have, however, our unique experiences both good and bad to share and invite you when you are in Minneapolis to visit with us. Any ideas and materials you have on your center efforts would be appreciated by us. Send reactions, suggestions or materials to:

Dr. Kenneth R. Howey
166 Peik Hall
University of Minnesota/Minneapolis
Schools Teacher Center
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455
612-376-4580
or 373-9736